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In This Issue:

State Civil War Trails  
Program, Tour Stop  
Exhibits Open at Ben-  
tonville

page 2

Horne Creek Farm  
Closes Temporarily

page 3

Transportation Mu-  
seum Staff Care for  
Autos, Rail Rolling  
Stock

page 5

CSS Neuse Site Recalls  
Ironclad's Scuttling

page 7

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[nchistoricsites.org](http://nchistoricsites.org)

## New Black History Month Program Popular at Stagville

This year Historic Stagville offered its first special school group tours for Black History Month. Although February is traditionally busy at the site, the new programming offered the possibility of even more visitors and increased visibility.

Stagville offers a number of special activities for school groups.

Typically a group receives a guided tour and participates in one activity. During Black History Month, we had two days weekly when students participated in two activities specially geared toward African-American history. Activities included African games, a freedom quilt craft, storytelling, African music and instruments, a discussion of WPA slave narratives from people once enslaved at Stagville, a discussion of slavery from the Middle Passage to emancipation, and a discussion of African-American music from spirituals to rock and roll.



This small change in our programming made a big difference. The site received many more calls and emails from teachers than normal, and staff had trouble fitting all schools into a short month. Classes that came had wonderful things to say about the activities, and many teachers promised to spread the word for next year. Some teachers encouraged others at their schools to come this spring: our group calendar is filling faster than usual.

Utilizing our website, regular publicity sources, and support group mailings to advertise, we reached a larger group than in past years. The website was the best source for teachers. It listed all activities (by age ranges) and tied in with the state standard course of study. This allowed us to offer more information than is possible in flyers or press releases. It also was easier for people to pass the word since the information was so readily available. We found teachers better prepared for tours, since they had advance information from the website.

This year's African-American program for school groups was a great success, with minimal extra effort. We plan to offer it again next year and anticipate even more response from teachers.

(Jessica Dockery)

## N.C. Civil War Trails Program Rolls Out at Bentonville

March was indeed a very busy month at Bentonville Battlefield, as the immensely popular reenactments held



there every five years drew 40,000 guests and 3,000 costumed reenactors this year. Earlier that same week, on March 14, another notable event occurred at the historic site.



Bentonville. An estimated 150 or more people attended the opening, which included remarks by Secretary of Cultural Resources Libba Evans, Deputy Secretary Dr. Jeffrey Crow, and other dignitaries. The occasion concluded

with the firing of a reproduction fieldpiece by costumed reenactors.



At the site, the Civil War Trails system and logo are represented by three improved tour stops, each with paved parking and several wayside exhibits marking important parts of the battle, which are included in the driving tour of the battlefield.

North Carolina Civil War Trails is a joint venture of the Department of Transportation and the Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development. Funds from a \$1.1-million federal transportation enhancement grant are being used to develop, design, fabricate, and install wayside interpretive markers at campaign sites and corridors of the Civil War. Some one hundred markers already are in place.



Nine other state historic sites are among locales on the trail, including Bennett Place (see *InSites*, March 2005), Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson, Fort Fisher, CSS *Neuse*/Richard Caswell, Tryon Palace, State Capitol, Edenton, Halifax, and Duke Homestead. Other sites may be added in the future.

## Horne Creek Farm Temporarily Closed

On March 10 Horne Creek Living Historical Farm near Pinnacle was temporarily closed. The deteriorating interim visitor center—a mobile home installed a number of years ago—appears no longer usable for occupancy and needs either replacement or very substantial repair and renovation. The division currently is attempting to purchase a new modular replacement unit and awaiting approval from State Construction and the Department of Insurance concerning a bid proposal for the new unit.

Meanwhile most items have been moved out of the old visitor center with much help from Bob Remsburg and Steve Hill. The staff now has limited computer access and has obtained portable toilets.

Normally, with educational programs ranging from white oak basket-making workshops to the annual cornshucking frolic, Horne Creek provides unique opportunity to learn about North Carolina's rural past. Its facilities include the Hauser farmhouse (1880), which is restored and furnished to the circa 1900-1910 era, a combination well and wash house, smokehouse, double-crib log feed barn, tobacco curing barn, corn-crib, a reconstructed fruit and vegetable dry house, trails, and outdoor exhibits.

However, because obtaining the modular unit may well take six months or more, visitors should make sure to call Horne Creek before coming by the site.

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## Staff Participate in Symposium on U.S. Colored Troops

On March 4-6 the Cultural Heritage Museum of Kinston presented a regional symposium on African American heritage and the U.S. Colored Troops of the Civil War. The conference was cosponsored by the U.S. Colored Troops Institute for Local History and Family Research, based at Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York.

The theme of the symposium was "Earning the Right to Citizenship." One day of the meeting was a group of seminars organized around two tracks. The first was on the history of African American involvement in the Civil War and how to find out more about the U.S. Colored Troops. The second track dealt with travel and tourism. Several members from the Division of Historic Sites and DCR were invited presenters.

Guy Smith of the CSS *Neuse* and Bert Felton of N.C. Civil War Trails gave a seminar in the travel and tourism track. Bert discussed N.C. Civil War Trails, while Guy talked about a future CSS *Neuse* Civil War Museum in downtown Kinston and how it may increase commerce there. The second seminar in the track was on marketing African-American attractions. Sharon Bryant, African American outreach coordinator at Tryon Palace, told of palace programs about African Americans.

In the history track, Paul Switzer, a volunteer at Tryon Palace, discussed the occupation of New Bern and creation of James City. John Joyner of Aycock Birthplace spoke on the occupation of Goldsboro by African American troops after the Civil War.

The Cultural Heritage Museum is a project of the Black Heritage Society. The museum will honor more than 200,000 black soldiers and their 7,000 white officers who fought in the Civil War, emphasizing U.S. Colored Troops from North Carolina. The museum also plans to treat local black veterans, Carl Long and Negro Baseball League players, Africa, and general black history. Museum supporters have purchased downtown property in Kinston to house the museum.

(John Joyner)



## Eagle Scout Projects Improve Reed Gold Mine

Industrious Boy Scouts have completed two essential site improvements at Reed Gold Mine. The first project was repairing a fire access road near Upper Hill, heart of the site's historic area. The second project was replacement of troughs in the panning area. Lack of state funds made both repairs impossible until two Eagle Scouts came to the rescue, as in numerous past cases.

Repairing the fire access road earned Josh Press of Concord his rank of Eagle Scout. He and staff member Daniel Blakemore found that both underbrush and overhanging trees need trimming. Many potholes also had formed, much gravel had washed away, and standing water in some areas caused problems as well. This situation hampered site vehicles on inspection tours and would have made the road nearly impassable for emergency equipment.

To document preparation and the repairs needed, Josh took many photos. After measuring the area, he began contacting companies that could help or donate items to the project. Vulcan Materials gladly donated all gravel, but Josh had to find a way to haul it to the site.

Looking for a dump truck and driver to haul the gravel, Josh stumbled across John Marston at BFI. BFI couldn't supply the truck or driver but donated Geo Tech netting. The netting would prevent stone from eroding and add another layer to the roadbed to hold the stone in place and hopefully make the bed last longer. Marston arranged for another driver and truck to haul the gravel for free.

Before the official work began, Josh, his family, and fellow scouts removed much of the overhanging trees and underbrush. In late August repairs to the roadway began. With fifteen volunteers, a tractor and scrape, a dump truck, shovels, and rakes, it still took the group all day to get the job done. Without donations, the total estimated cost of the project would have been \$5,325. It took 176 hours to complete. Thanks to Josh, his family, and his scout troop!

Cameron Hasty of Indian Trail decided that his Eagle Scout project would be the second much-needed repair, rebuilding panning troughs at the site's educational panning area. (Cameron is Daniel Blakemore's nephew.) When the 2004 panning season ended in October, all three troughs contained rotted, leaking areas threatening to collapse.

Much lumber was donated by Jordan Lumber of Mt. Gilead; the state supplied plywood. Cameron secured donation of hardware to assemble the troughs.

In spite of a sleet storm, building of troughs began inside the maintenance building in January. Cameron, with twelve other volunteers, cut wood and assembled the troughs on sawhorses. All troughs were sealed inside and out to help weatherproof them. Once each trough was together, the next step was hauling it to the panning area and setting it up without taking it apart. There the final touches of waterproofing the trough were applied. Brick and stone foundations were redone to ensure that all troughs were level.

By working every Saturday in February and March, Cameron and his crew ensured that troughs are now ready for the 2005 panning season. We greatly appreciate their hard work and expect the troughs to last for many years.

Susan E. Smith

## Auto and Rail Care and Repair at the Transportation Museum

The NCTM automobile committee is taking a variety of steps to protect and preserve the museum's vehicles. One of the first stages in the process is developing maintenance and use policies for both museum and NCTM Foundation vehicles. The committee is also launching a volunteer program to help with maintenance, upkeep, and regular driving of operating vehicles. Those interested in volunteering can contact Bob Hopkins at 704-636-2889, ext. 256. All volunteers will receive training.



In other automobile news, the 1955 Nash is getting a new water pump, new wiring, a tune-up, and front-end suspension work. Once the car is road-worthy, it will be registered and insured and used as an ambassador vehicle for the museum. The 1935 Ford Highway Patrol car will be at Garner Station for the town's centennial April 16. Either the 1955 Nash or the 1922 Buick will go to Reed Gold Mine April 26-27 for Heritage Days. One of these two cars will join the Spencer centennial parade April 16.

Rail operations volunteers, gearing up for the 2005 train ride season, spent many hours in the restoration shop. Work weekends attracted high turnouts, except for a couple of foul-weather weekends. A blitz the weekend of February 19-20 to reduce the number of items on the project board brought out nearly forty volunteers, and a substantial amount of riveting was completed.

Staff and volunteers in the shop emphasized restoration of the Norfolk & Western No.



1506 combination car, which is being converted into a handicapped-accessible (ADA) car and will become part of the on-site passenger train.



Restoration of the Tweetsie combination car in the paint shop, the U.S. Army Hospital car, and re-roofing of Canadian coach No. 4953 are also on the list of projects. The 1925 Shay is getting annual maintenance, so it can steam again later

this spring. The diesel department also has been working on winter maintenance projects. Rebuilding of the boiler for the No. 604 steam engine is progressing, and Historic Machinery Services Corp. of Birmingham, Ala., has been chosen to do this work.

(Misty Ebel and George Weber)

## Regulators are Well Represented by their Descendants

In October 2004 a couple from Las Vegas, Nevada, visited Alamance Battleground. They were not in town for the outlet malls but had come to Alamance County specifically to visit the battleground. This means they purchased round-trip plane tickets, rented a car, stayed in area hotels, and ate at local restaurants (yes, I asked all these questions). The reason for the couple's trip—the man's wife is a direct descendant of Peter Craven, who was one of the most active Regulators, and she wanted to see the place where he fought! To top things off, as I gave them a tour of the Allen House, we were joined by a direct descendant of the Allens!

Such instances are in fact not that odd here at Alamance, because interest in the War of the Regulation and the Battle of Alamance, which ended it, is high among descendants of the Regulators. A simple review of the guest register proves this. For instance, a family of four from South Carolina came in June of last year. We learned they were descendants of Regulator Capt. Robert Messer who was hung in Hillsborough with five other Regulators on June 19, 1771. This past September Billy and Lynn Merrill drove up from Florida to have me pull out the partial list of regulators. Mr. Merrill wanted to see the name of his ancestor, Benjamin Merrill. Benjamin Merrill too was hung at Hillsborough. Family legend says he was also disemboweled in front of his wife and eight children! We cannot authenticate this, but the family tells it!

I could cite several more examples. Then there is Jimmy Carter's new book, *The Hornet's Nest*. It seems the former president had an ancestor who fought at the Battle of Alamance! Since I've been here, I bet we have had two hundred visitors who read about our site in President Carter's novel. It is a matter of record that the president's office contacted the site during the book's research phase.

It should be noted as well that a descendant of royal governor William Tryon even visited the site! This happened on August 26, 2004, and he proudly brought several friends with him!

The Regulators are not just remembered, they are revered by their ancestors.

(Bill Thompson)

## William R. Davie House Roof Repairs

After much anticipation, Historic Halifax is pleased to report that the William R. Davie House is currently receiving a new roof. This long-awaited temporary restoration will help protect the building and stop multiple leaks until full restoration of the house can take place. This replacement is the first re-roofing project to take place in the Northeast Section using bond money released to the DCR Capital Projects Unit. The project began on February 14 with an expected completion date of May 14. The next stage in the Davie House restoration will be stabilization of the foundation, to be completed by the division's craftsmen.

Davie (1756-1820), born in England of Scottish parents, was a graduate of the College of New Jersey (Princeton), Revolutionary War officer, statesman, and founder of the University of North Carolina. After the Revolution he practiced law in Halifax and married into the aristocratic family of Allen and Willie Jones. A Federalist and active Mason, he was elected governor in 1798.

(Halifax staff)

## 140th Anniversary of *Neuse's* Scuttling Commemorated

March 12 marked the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the scuttling of the Confederate iron-clad ram CSS *Neuse*. The crew of the ship was forced to sink the vessel to avoid its capture by Union forces following the Battle of Wyse Fork, just outside of Kinston. That engagement (the second largest land battle fought in North Carolina during the Civil War) was part of the larger Carolinas Campaign in 1865, which helped end the war. Parts of the vessel, including the cannons, iron plating, and engines, were salvaged following the scuttling. The remains of the sunken ship lay on the river bottom for almost a century before being recovered and put on display in the 1960s.



The service of the CSS *Neuse* and her crew was remembered during a daylong living history program at the CSS *Neuse*. Confederate Navy reenactors greeted visitors and talked about naval life in the 1860s. Displays focused on navigation, weaponry, and shipboard medicine. Cannon-firing demonstrations were conducted throughout the day. The Carteret Grays played music from the period. At 3 p.m. a ceremony was held to commemorate the scuttling of the vessel with a reading of the

roster of the crew and an artillery salute.

The program was cosponsored by the CSS *Neuse* Gunboat Association, Inc. Participating living history organizations include the Ship's Company of the *Roanoke*, North Carolina Naval Squadron, Submarine Battery Service, and Ship's Company CSS *Virginia*.

(Andrew Duppstadt)

## Profile: Robbie Putnam

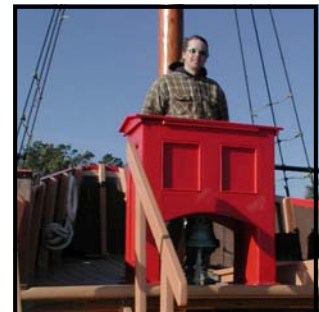
Capt. Robbie Putnam, a native of Dare County, has taken the helm of the representative sixteenth-century sailing vessel, the *Elizabeth II*, whose home port is Roanoke Island Festival Park (RIFP). The ship is the park's main attraction and also sails twice yearly to other ports, bringing history alive.

Putnam, thirty, has been employed at RIFP for twelve years. His first assignment was assisting with maintenance, but he soon found himself working on the *Elizabeth II*. He trained for his new position under former captain Horace Whitfield, who left the position in 2002.

"It's a real challenge. The boat itself is heavy and does not react quickly to changes in steering or direction. You have to look ahead a couple of minutes because it takes so long to react to commands," Putnam said.

The *Elizabeth II* has recently returned to Festival Park after extensive repairs including replacing the ship's stern post, stern planking, and gun ports. This year the docked vessel will host thousands of school children and visitors. Exciting voyages are also scheduled. The ship will participate in Bath's tri-centennial celebration in September. Captain Putnam will direct a large volunteer crew and the six paid staff members.

(Tanya Young)





## Selected April Events at Roanoke Island Festival Park

### April 11-15 **Watercolor Workshop with Tom Francesconi**

Art Gallery. Fee

*A partnership between RIFP and the Dare County Arts Council. Mr. Francesconi studied art at Eastern Illinois University and the American Academy of Art in Chicago. He has received awards in major national exhibitions and earned signature membership in the National Watercolor Society, the Transparent Watercolor Society of America (of which he is president emeritus), and the Northwest Watercolor Society. His works are in collections throughout the country. To learn the cost of the workshop, call Peggy Saporito at 252-449-8389 or email [peggysaporito@earthlink.net](mailto:peggysaporito@earthlink.net).*

### April 23 **Second Annual Tux and Topsider Dance**

8 p.m. Maritime Museum on Roanoke Island. Tickets \$50 each from the Maritime Museum or RIFP, or by calling (252) 475-1750.

*Annual dance at the George Washington Creef Boat House in downtown Manteo. Music by The Crowd. Heavy hors d'oeuvres, beer, and wine. Dress "yacht club casual"—tux not required; wear your favorite yacht club attire! Silent auction. Proceeds from dance benefit N.C. Maritime Museum on Roanoke Island.*

### April 23 **Tour de Cure Cycling Event**

The Outdoor Pavilion

*100-mile ride from Chesapeake, Va., to Manteo, N.C., where participants end their fundraising journey at RIFP. Benefits American Diabetes Association. For information, call (757) 455-6335, ext 3276 or 1-888-DIABETES, ext 3281.*

### April 30 **March of Dimes—Walk America 2005**

9 a.m. Outdoor Pavilion

*March of Dimes sponsors Outer Banks Walk America. Registration 9 a.m. Walk begins at 10 a.m. Five-mile walk takes participants through historic Manteo, followed by a picnic. For more information, call (757) 361-0000 or 1-800-732-7097.*

## Profile: Kim Tweedy

Kim Tweedy joined the Reed Gold Mine staff on March 15 as a full-time historic interpreter. The position she filled was previously an office assistant position but was upgraded to give Reed two historic interpreters. Kim graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in the spring of 2004 with a degree in history. Before joining the Reed Gold Mine staff, she worked at Fort Dobbs in Statesville researching colonial history and assisting in planning special events. While at UNC, she worked in the North Carolina Collection's gallery. She has also volunteered at the state archaeology lab in Raleigh.

Kim enjoys going to the beach, snow skiing, and UNC sports. Go Heels! She is eager to learn about gold mining and its history and is very excited to be a part of the Reed Gold Mine family. Kim finished her first week at Reed on an exciting note—working the popular Gold Rush Run. Now that she is "broken in," she'll be ready for the panning season!

(Kim Tweedy)



## A Year in the Life of the Bennehans and Others

Former curator Clare Bass and site board member Jan Hessling worked hard researching and writing a comprehensive furnishing plan for the Bennehan House. This plan will accurately describe furnishings in the house in the first quarter of the 19th century. Once the plan is complete, we can start furnishing the historic house to that date. Meanwhile board members, volunteers, and staff have begun creating period costumes. As styles changed so quickly, we decided on a specific year to interpret through clothing—1815.

1815 was an interesting year globally as well as in the Bennehan and Cameron families. The Napoleonic wars finally ended June 18, 1815, at the Battle of Waterloo. A major event closer to home was the War of 1812 between America and Great Britain. The Treaty of Ghent, ending that war, was signed December 24, 1814. However, the news had not yet reached American and British forces at New Orleans by January 8, 1815, when Andrew Jackson led the Americans to victory in the Battle of New Orleans. Though the treaty had been signed, the war was not officially over until ratifications were exchanged on February 17, 1815.

As the conflict closed, there were a couple of notable events in the United States. On January 30 Thomas Jefferson helped reestablish the Library of Congress (which British troops had burned) by donating his library of 6500 books. On February 6 New Jersey granted the first American railroad charter to John Stevens. Of all national news, North Carolinians were most proud of the fact that local girl Dolly Payne Madison served as first lady while her husband, James Madison, was president from 1809 to 1817.

Things were starting to look up for the “Rip Van Winkle State.” From 1790 to 1802, no bills relating to education had been introduced in the General Assembly. From 1804 to 1814 education was not even mentioned there. In 1815, however, the legislature appointed the first committees on education. Also in 1815, Archibald D. Murphey drew up the first comprehensive plan for state internal improvements. It featured improving transportation, building up markets, and draining swamps to improve health and promote agriculture.

The Bennehans and Camerons were busy during this time. Thomas Bennehan became a trustee of the University of North Carolina in 1812, serving until his death in 1847. Duncan Cameron held an administrative post and the rank of general during the War of 1812. A Federalist, he promoted progressive reform for the state following the war.

Construction of Fairtosh, Duncan and Rebecca Cameron’s home, began in 1810. The family (Duncan, Rebecca, and four children) moved in by late 1812. Mary Bennehan, Rebecca’s mother, died in 1812, leaving husband Richard and son Thomas at Stagville. As Duncan was frequently away on business, Rebecca and her children often visited Stagville. The Bennehans received many visitors; their house then contained twelve bedsteads and thirty-six Windsor chairs.

The first quarter of the 19th century was busy for the nation, and 1815 marked a turning point in the history of the state. We hope, through accurate furnishings and costuming, to teach visitors about that important time.

(Jennifer Farley)